

Matthew 22:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk.

Analysis

Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk. The verb παγιδεύσωσιν (pagideusōsin, 'to entangle' or 'ensnare') comes from παγίς (pagis), meaning trap or snare used for animals. The Pharisees deliberately plot to catch Jesus in verbal contradiction, seeking grounds for accusation. This occurs during Passion Week, Tuesday in the temple courts, following Jesus's devastating parables against the religious establishment (21:28-22:14).

Took counsel (συμβούλιον ἔλαβον/symboulion elabon) indicates formal deliberation, a calculated conspiracy rather than spontaneous opposition. Their goal is **in his talk** (ἐν λόγῳ/en logō)—to use Jesus's own words against Him. This mirrors Satan's strategy in Eden and the wilderness temptations, twisting words to create apparent dilemmas. The religious leaders' hostility has escalated from questioning Jesus's authority (21:23) to actively plotting His destruction.

Historical Context

This conspiracy occurred during Jesus's final week before crucifixion, likely Tuesday of Passion Week. The Pharisees had been Jesus's primary opponents throughout His Galilean ministry, challenged by His disregard for their oral traditions (Matthew 15:1-9) and His claim to forgive sins (9:3). Following the triumphal entry and temple cleansing, tensions reached crisis level. Jesus had publicly humiliated the religious establishment through parables depicting them as

rebellious sons (21:28-32), murderous tenants (21:33-46), and wedding guests unworthy of the feast (22:1-14). The Pharisees recognized these parables targeted them (21:45), making their conspiracy urgent.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How do religious people today 'entangle' others in theological debates to avoid confronting their own hearts?
2. What motivates plotting against God's truth—intellectual disagreement or threatened self-interest and power?
3. How does conspiracy to trap Jesus in His words contrast with genuine truth-seeking dialogue?

Interlinear Text

Τότε	πορευθέντες	οἱ	Φαρισαῖοι	συμβούλιον	ἔλαβον
Then	went	G3588	the Pharisees	counsel	and took
G5119	G4198		G5330	G4824	G2983

ὅπως	αὐτὸν	παγιδεύσωσιν	ἐν	λόγῳ
how	him	they might entangle	in	his talk
G3704	G846	G3802	G1722	G3056

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 2:2 (Parallel theme): The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying,